Private Dances

1. Sexy
2. Sad
3. Sentimental
4. Sultry
5. Saintly
6. Swingin'

by
Kyle Gann
2000/04
Private Dances (2000/4)

for piano

I dance only privately, and in my head: thus, Private Dances. I have never been one to write suites of small pieces, but I was motivated to try to do so by the example of Bill Duckworth’s wonderful pieces in this genre, like The Time Curve Preludes and Imaginary Dances. The ideas for Private Dances are all rhythmic, and "Sexy" is the simplest, an ever-further-modulating tango. "Sad" is an arrangement for live pianist of one of my Disklavier studies, Folk Dance for Henry Cowell, I had to excise some of the original 11-against-13 rhythms, but the piece is still tricky. The idea was to have a clear harmonic rhythm while thoroughly obscuring the meter. "Sentimental" plays with a messy kind of counterpoint in which the two hands rarely come together, implying different tempos. "Sultry" cycles through a series of 11 chords in a repeating rhythm of 29/4 meter - but not every chord appears in every cycle. "Saintly" starts out with a melody in virtual 4/4 over a 5/4 ostinato, but after an impassioned climax, the two hands switch meters, and thereby achieve calm. "Swingin'" is freer, releasing a boogie-woogie melody from its implied 4/4 meter and letting it cadence when- and wherever it wants. The obvious seventh dance would have had to be "Savage," and since I didn’t want to fall into the clichês of the early 20th-century "danse sauvage," I couldn’t bring myself to write it (though John Luther Adams has since suggested "Surly"). I wrote the first two and a half dances in 2000, and finished out the set in a burst of inspiration in 2004. The pieces were commissioned, inspired, premiered, and finally recorded by Sarah Cahill, on a New Albion CD.

Duration: 25 minutes

Kyle Gann
for Sarah Cahill

Private Dances

1. Sexy

Sultry, confident, unhurried

\( q = 96 - 100 \)

Private Dances
1. Sexy

Kyle Gann
2000

Piano

Left hand an octave below where notated, throughout

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Private Dances
it is the Gb that is rearticulated.

*Note that here the Eb is tied over, and it is the Gb that is rearticulated.
2. Sad

\[ \text{Delicate, hesitant} \]

\[ \text{evenly, not beat-accented} \]

\[ \text{Private Dances} \]

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3. Sentimental

† = 112

Delicately

Kyle Gann
2000/03

Private Dances
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4. Sultry

Lazy, dreamy, but with a background feel of rhythmic energy

Kyle Gann
2004

Private Dances
5. Saintly

Kyle Gann
2004

Piano

\( \text{mp, but with a clear ringing melody and some "oomph" on the bass notes} \)

Private Dances
gradually growing in intensity to m. 48
Private Dances
Private Dances
April 24 - May 31, 2004
Red Hook, NY

Private Dances
6. Swingin'

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Private Dances
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Suddenly p

May 20-24, 2004
Red Hook, New York